



Friday 3rd July 2026

Longbenton High School Consultation Outcome Proposed Two-Week October Half-Term (2026/27)

Dear Colleagues, Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your extensive engagement and feedback during the consultation regarding the proposed change to the 2026/27 academic calendar. At Longbenton High School, we are committed to a genuine consultation process, and the volume of responses received from all stakeholders has been vital in reaching a final determination.

The Decision

Following a comprehensive review of all feedback, the Governing Board has decided not to proceed with the extension of the October half-term to two weeks for the 2026/27 academic year.

While the internal support for this proposal was very high, we have determined that the potential for disruption to our local educational community is currently too significant. We value our relationships with our feeder primary schools too much to create a risk that would impact shared families and their learning routines.

Consultation Highlights and Data

The proposal was driven by a desire to improve wellbeing and attendance of staff and students to combat "Autumn burnout". The support from within our school was compelling:

- **Parental Support:** Over 70% of parents who responded were in favour of the two-week break. Notably, almost 90% of parents of Pupil Premium students supported the change, with many citing the economic benefit of lower travel costs during non-peak times.
- **Staff Support:** More than 80% of staff were in support, with most believing it would have a positive impact on reducing mid-term fatigue.
- **Student Voice:** Two-thirds of our tutor groups were strongly or mostly in favour, highlighting better recovery time and improved teacher energy.
- **Learning Consistency:** We confirmed that students would still receive their full 190 days of education by reallocating training into "twilight" sessions, ensuring no loss of teaching time.

Extension to Feeder School Consultation

In order to ensure we had a fully rounded view of the local educational landscape, we extended our consultation period again to specifically seek the opinions of our feeder primary schools. This final stage of information gathering was crucial for our Governors to understand the "unintended consequences" this change might have on our primary partners and shared families. This feedback was carefully collated and presented for a final decision at the Full Governing Board (FGB) meeting on June 30th.

The Impact on Primary Schools and Sibling Alignment

The primary reason for our decision is the feedback from our local educational partners. Our consultation with neighbouring primary headteachers showed that they did not support the proposal. Key concerns included:

- **Sibling Alignment:** Many of our parents have other children attending different schools. Primary schools expressed concern that misaligned calendars would lead to increased unauthorised absences for younger siblings.
- **Logistical Challenges:** Parents highlighted that mismatched holidays would create significant childcare issues, as many families would still be tied to the traditional Local Authority schedule for their younger children.

- Learning Momentum: Primary leaders felt the Autumn term is a critical period for settling new routines and that a two-week gap would disrupt the "momentum" required for statutory assessments later in the year.

Looking Forward

Although we will not implement this change for the 2026/27 year, Rebecca Watson (our new Headteacher) and the Governing Board will continue to work collaboratively with our primary pyramid to explore future holiday options that support the wellbeing of our entire community without compromising the stability of our partner schools.

Thank you for your ongoing support and for sharing your views with us.

Yours sincerely,

Mr J Elliott

Acting Headteacher